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ABSTRACT

An historical background on curriculum evaluation including terms as they were introduced is presented. The historical approach provides a sense of continuity and direction, and historical perspectives offer necessary references for future curriculum study. Curriculum evaluation at the turn of this century emphasized the testing and measurement methodology as a kind of product control. Between 1930-1960, curriculum evaluation included a variety of evidence on student performance and program effectiveness. In the 1960s, the terms formative and summative were related to the evaluation process. By the early 1970s, researchers in the field emphasized the lack of balance between theoretical and empirical papers on curriculum evaluation, which led to determining curricular conditions that affect the nature of evaluation and its limits. The idea of illuminative evaluation was introduced in the late 1970s. At this time, the trend in curriculum evaluation moved away from a formal model or recipe. This trend coincided with the accountability movement of the 1970s when society assigned increased responsibilities and resources to education. The importance of the ongoing process of critical review and revision was stressed in this period. In the 1980s, the search is for a qualitative analysis. One best system for doing curriculum development and evaluation has not proven to be a fruitful goal. Contains 18 references. (SM)

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Curriculum Evaluation: An Historical Approach

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Historical writing in the field of curriculum enhances communication among people. This historical perspective can be construed as a type of dialogue across generations about the basic concerns of the field. Present-day practitioners can be made aware of the ideas and forces that have helped to shape the field of curriculum. This historical approach can thus provide some sense of continuity and direction. A broad perspective on the state of the curriculum field can be transmitted or certain issues in particular can be historically traced.

Historical perspectives in the field of curriculum provide necessary references for future curriculum study. The purpose of this paper is to provide historical background on curriculum evaluation with the inclusion of terms as they were introduced.

Curriculum evaluation at the turn of this century emphasized the testing and measurement methodology as a kind of product control (Bobbitt, 1924). It was in the period between 1930-1960 that curriculum evaluation included a variety of evidence on student performance and program effectiveness. In 1949 Ralph Tyler introduced his Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction that has become an established reference in the field of curriculum.

Tyler's model consists of a four step process-1). stating objectives, 2). selecting experiences to meet these objectives, 3). organizing these experiences into activities, and 4).

evaluating the outcomes. "The process of evaluation is essentially the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realized by the program of curriculum and instruction." (p. 69). Thus the statement of objectives serves as the standard against which the program is assessed. This evaluative process matches initial expectations in the form of behavioral objectives with the outcomes.

This definition of evaluation later becomes expanded upon when Scriven (1967) writes: "The activity consists simply in gathering and combining of performance data with a weighted set of goal scales to yield either comparative or numerical ratings; and in the justification of a). the data-gathering instruments, b). the weightings, and c). the selection of goals." (p. 40). It was also during this period of curriculum history that the terms formative and summative were related to the evaluation process. Formative evaluation became a focus on the implementation processes as summative evaluation focused on the outcomes. The formative dealt with context, input, and process for improvement. Summative concentrated solely on the final product and adapting to the situation.

Lewy (1973) indicates that the practitioner in the field of curriculum will encounter difficulties in selecting a model. Even if a new eclectic model were developed containing elements from other existing ones, it would be difficult to

translate the model into the guidelines for practical work. It was during this period that the researchers in the field of curriculum emphasized a lack of balance between theoretical and empirical papers on curriculum evaluation. Most models were found to reflect some unique conditions that were not generalizable to other situations.

This awareness led to determinization of conditions of curriculum that affect the nature of evaluation and its limits. (Lewy, 1973). As the definition of curriculum was changing, so was the definition of curriculum evaluation. Evaluation was also considering the nature of the educational system for which the new curriculum is being produced. The organizational structure of the evaluative activity was now being related to the curriculum developmental activity. One of the aims of evaluation was to determine the worth of the curriculum. Evaluation at this point was not looked upon as an aim in itself.

In a study by Walker and Schaffarzick (1974), there was a search for signs of superiority of innovative curricula over the traditional Tyler curricula model. The results found a superiority did not exist but that each curricula did better on the distinctive parts of its own program. Each curricula did about equally well on parts held in common. The implications from this study suggested more research be directed toward creating evaluative measures of a variety of outcomes other than achievement as a final product.

Parlett and Hamilton (1977) introduce the new idea of illuminative evaluation. This term seeks to describe and interpret and takes account of the contexts in which educational innovations must function. Innovation now becomes a major educational priority. Decisions to change are more than educational with the intervention of politics and finance. More recently innovation has been joined by evaluation. The evaluator now concentrates on the process rather than the outcomes as an informed account of innovation in operation. Bellack and Kliebard (1977) question at this period of time the merit of the specification of objectives as exemplified in the Tyler model. The trend became not to consider this model as the universal mode of curriculum development. Evaluation now looks at the more significant latent outcomes.

Scientific methodology does not encompass all the ways in which learning takes place. In order to view educational practice through a new perspective of describing, interpreting, and evaluating, Eisner (1977) introduces two new concepts to the field of curriculum evaluation. Educational connoisseurship is an evaluative concept that makes the appreciation of such a complex task possible. This connoisseurship is an awareness of the characteristics and qualities of the educational event. It is through educational criticism that the evaluator provides the terms of what was encountered so as to describe for others the event as a connoisseur would appreciate it.

The trend in curriculum evaluation is at this period moving away from a formal model or recipe. Sage (1978) suggests an evaluation approach based on the utilization of the results. The requirements for this approach are the definition of relevant decisionmakers and evaluators working actively in a cooperative effort. Everything else is a matter for negotiation or adaptation. Eisner (1978) suggests the switch from the evaluation focusing on experimental isolated events reflected in behavior to the more complex perspective that seeks meaning in the culture of the educational situation.

Curriculum in this sense is viewed as an art and the evaluator works as the literary critic. The evaluator as an artist functions in two ways. First, the curriculum evaluator focuses on the aesthetic aspect noting the qualities of an educational experience. Secondly, the evaluator uses aesthetic forms of communication to present the findings to an audience. This concept of the evaluator as an artist brings a touch of humanity to the process.

This trend in the history of curriculum evaluation coincided with the accountability movement of the 1970's when society assigned increased responsibilities and resources to education. Federally funded projects had their own requirements for evaluative information. The definition of evaluation came to mean a study that is designed and conducted to assist some audience to judge and improve the worth of some educational object. Webster and Stufflebeam (1978) suggests

the necessity of three types of studies: the politically oriented type, the question oriented type, and the values oriented type. In an effort to provide vital support for advancing education, Webster and Stufflebeam along with other researchers of this period state the importance of the ongoing process of critical review and revision.

There have been three differing philosophical orientations that have dominated researchers' thinking about schools (Weiss, 1980). First, the schools are a means of transmitting society's cultural heritage. Second, the purpose of education is the fulfullment of each individual's capability. And third, schools should compensate for deficiencies in society. The history of education shows that all three coexist, but at certain times a particular orientation appears to be dominant over the others. The closer an instrument of evaluation resembles the norm, the more it fits into the conventional mold. Research is now permeated with the evaluation of conventional outcomes by conventional means. In such a way curriculum evaluation maintains the status quo.

Apple (1980) criticizes most of the case study writers to look beyond the school to the broader political and economic environment. The evaluation of the social and educational outcomes of schooling itself are now seen as having ties to unequal cultural and economic power. He suggests that curriculum evaluation needs a more thorough understanding of the intricacies of what schools do and that researchers are now

investigating "curriculum-in-use."(p.56). Pagano and Dolan sum up curriculum studies by stating their intent to perfect the means of maintaining a balance between social stability and social evolution. Evaluation research requires an account of values, contextual and individual understandings, and processes as opposed to products. This period looks for a qualitative analysis in curriculum evaluation assessing what exists in a socially meaningful way.

Answers are being sought concerning the social and educational relevance for different kinds of learners, the worth and validity of content and materials, the impact of programs on the behavior patterns of teachers and learners, and the measured outcomes of the use of selected instructional materials. Rodgers (1983) in pursuit of answers to these suggests the following steps to conducting curriculum evaluation (p.147):

1). Define primary audiences and identify the critical issues.

2). Identify the information that is relevant to each issue and the best sources for obtaining the necessary information.

3). Determine how much information should be collected.

4). Select the appropriate instruments and procedures ro collect information.

5). Interpret and analyze the required data.

One best system for doing curriculum development and evaluation has not proven to be a fruitful goal. Many ways are possible and yet various schemes can be

flawed(Short,1985,p.239). The history of curriculum evaluation has shown methodological approaches ranging from experimental to more eclectic models. It is throughout this history that research has sought a new vision of curriculum evaluation as it relates to curriculum development and the factors in society influencing education.

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